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Remarks:

The amendments and remarks presented herein are believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action dated October 16, 2007, the period for response being extended via the attached petition and fee for a one month extension of time.

Claims 1-11 are pending in the application. Claims 12-21 were previously canceled without prejudice and independent claim 1 has been amended as set forth above. The amendments are fully supported in the specification and drawings as originally filed. No new matter has been added.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW CONDUCTED FEBRUARY 7, 2008

The undersigned would like to thank Examiner Amari for the courtesies extended during the telephone interview conducted on February 7, 2008. During the interview, the undersigned was given the opportunity to discuss the claimed invention and the cited art of record, particularly Gillich et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,709,119. During the interview, the above clarification of independent claim 1 was discussed, and the Examiner indicated that this overcomes the present claim rejection.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

Claims 1-5, 8 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schmidt, U.S. Patent No. 6,030,084, in view of Gillich et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,709,119. Claims 6, 7, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schmidt, in view of Gillich et al., and further in view of Wheatley et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,262,894.

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Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). However, and without acquiescing in the rejections in any manner and solely to expedite prosecution and allowance of the claims, Applicant has clarified independent claim 1 and submits that the present claims are in condition for allowance for at least the reasons set forth below.

Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to clarify that the thin at least partially flexible glass sheet has a thickness of less than approximately 0.8 mm and greater than approximately 0.3 mm.

The wide angle reflective element of the claimed invention of independent claim 1 thus includes a thin at least partially flexible glass sheet that exists as a pre-formed glass sheet that is separate from the polymeric mirror substrate. The thin at least partially flexible glass sheet has a thickness of less than approximately 0.8 mm and greater than approximately 0.3 mm. The attaching surface of the separate, pre-formed thin at least partially flexible glass sheet is opposed to and adhered to the exterior surface of the polymeric mirror substrate to form the wide angle reflective element.

With respect to the rejection of independent claim 1 in view of the combination of Schmidt and Gillich et al., Applicant submits that this combination does not disclose, teach, suggest or render obvious the wide angle reflective element of the present invention, particularly as set forth in independent claim 1 and in the claims depending therefrom, for at least the reasons set forth in the previous responses, the arguments of which are incorporated herein, and for at least the reasons set forth below.

The combination of Gillich et al. and Schmidt does not disclose or teach or suggest a pre-formed, pre-existing thin flexible glass sheet as is disclosed and claimed in the present application. To the contrary, the protective layer 101 of Gillich et al. is a hard coat similar to the hard coats discussed and distinguished in the background section of the present invention. In

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stark contrast to the thin flexible glass sheet of the claimed invention, and as discussed in the background section of the present application (see page 1, paragraph [0002] of the present application), such hard coats are provided (such as via dip coating or vacuum deposition or the like) on the first or outer or exterior surface of the reflective element which is contacted by the exterior elements. The disclosure of Gillich et al. clearly is limited to a hard coat or protective layer that is coated or deposited or formed on a separate substrate and that does not exist as a pre-formed glass sheet.

As can be seen with reference to Figure 1 of Gillich et al. (reproduced to the right), the reflector 100 includes a reflector body 108 that is coated by a plurality of layers 101-107, which include the protective layer 101. The reflector body may be provided as a rolled product, whereby some or all of the layers 101-107 may be deposited or

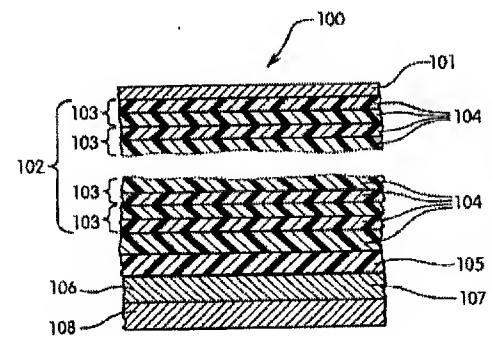


Fig. 1

applied on a surface of the rolled product in a continuous process. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Gillich et al. that any of the coatings or layers may be provided as a separately existing pre-formed sheet that is adhered to the surface of the reflector body. Moreover, Gillich et al. teaches away from such a configuration by teaching that the layers can be deposited via immersion, spraying, vaporization or sputtering or the like, all of which function to establish or form the layer on the surface and none of which utilize a pre-formed sheet of the applied materials. Gillich et al. further teaches away from such a configuration by teaching that the preferred thickness of the protective coating or layer is 3 nm to 400 nm and that the maximum thickness of the protective coating or layer is 1000 nm, as discussed below.

Thus, the protective layer of Gillich et al. is not a pre-formed thin flexible glass sheet. This is evidenced, for example, by the statement in Gillich et al. that "the minimum thickness of the protective layer is 3 nm. The maximum thickness of the protective layer may, for example, be 1000 nm and advantageously 400 nm. In another embodiment the thickness of

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the protected layer may preferably be 40 nm or less. The thickness of the protective layer may in particular be 3 to 20 nm. In the present description of the invention, the term nm means nanometer." See column 2, lines 32-39 of Gillich et al. Thus, Gillich et al. teaches away from the present invention by teaching that the *maximum* thickness of the deposited protective layer is 1000 nm, which is 0.001 mm, which is substantially less than the thickness (less than approximately 0.8 mm and greater than approximately 0.3 mm) of the pre-formed glass sheet of the claimed invention.

The hard coat of Gillich et al. thus is not a thin flexible glass sheet that exists as a pre-formed glass sheet that is separate from a polymeric mirror substrate, as is clearly evident by the disclosure in Gillich et al. that the hard coat of Gillich et al. has a maximum thickness of 1,000 nanometers (see column 2, lines 32-36 of Gillich et al.). Such a hard coat thus is less than 0.001 millimeters thick and thus such a hard coat is not providable as a pre-formed thin flexible sheet (i.e., a sheet existing by itself as a flexible sheet and not as a layer that is coated or deposited on a separate substrate) that exists separate from the substrate or reflector body. Moreover, and as stated in the background section and Summary of the Invention section of the present application, such a hard coat will not provide the benefits of the claimed invention.

Further, the hard coat of Gillich et al. is disclosed as being applied to the reflector body by deposition in vacuum or by thermal vaporization or by electron beam vaporization or by sputtering or by plasma polymerization or by chemical vapor deposition (see column 7, line 66 through column 8, line 12 of Gillich et al.). The Office Action states that the disclosure at column 8, lines 28-37 of Gillich et al. evidences that the protective layer can be formed as a pre-existing, pre-formed glass sheet that is separate from the mirror substrate of claim 1 (see page 7 of the Office Action).

Applicant respectfully traverses. The cited lines of Gillich et al. merely disclose that the *reflector body* (not the protective layer) may be provided as a rolled product, e.g. foils,

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strips or sheets, and that the coatings or layers (including the protective layer) may be applied or deposited on the rolled reflector body in a continuous process (such as by immersion, spraying, etc.). This is evidenced by the statement at column 3, lines 13-17 of Gillich et al. that "examples of reflector bodies are castings and forgings and in particular rolled products such as foils, strips, plates, sheets," and is further evidenced by the statement at column 2, lines 28-30 of Gillich et al. that "the protective layer is considered as one of the transparent layers in the sequence of reflective layers." As described throughout Gillich et al., the transparent layers are coated or deposited on the reflector body and do not exist as a pre-formed sheet separate from the reflector body and thus cannot have an attaching surface opposed to and adhered to an exterior surface of a polymeric mirror substrate, as set forth in independent claim 1 above.

Thus, Gillich et al. discloses that the protective layer is deposited on the surface of the reflector body via a suitable coating or forming process, such as vaporization, sputtering, immersion, spraying, sol-gel process and/or the like. Applicant submits that Gillich et al. is utterly devoid of any disclosure or suggestion that the protective layer may be provided as a thin at least partially flexible glass sheet existing as a pre-formed glass sheet that is separate from the reflector body and that has an attaching surface opposed to and adhered to an exterior surface of the reflector body when the thin at least partially flexible sheet is adhered to the exterior surface of the reflector body. Nor is there any disclosure or suggestion in Gillich et al. of such a thin glass sheet that has a thickness of less than approximately 0.8 mm and greater than approximately 0.3 mm. Therefore, the combination of Schmidt and Gillich et al. does not disclose, suggest or render obvious the invention claimed herein.

With respect to the rejection of dependent claims 2-11, Applicant submits that the combination of Schmidt and Gillich et al., either alone or in further combination with Wheatley et al., does not disclose, teach or suggest or render obvious the claimed invention for at least the reasons set forth above.

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Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that neither Schmidt nor Gillich et al., either alone or in combination with one another or with any other prior art of record, disclose, teach, suggest or render obvious the wide angle reflective element of the present invention, particularly as set forth in independent claim 1 and in the claims depending therefrom. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-11 is respectfully requested.

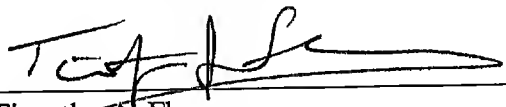
Claims 1-11 remain pending in the application. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-11 are in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is earnestly and respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the above discussion, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney to discuss this further.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: Van Dyke, Gardner, Linn & Burkhart, LLP

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